

City of Hollister

Water Rate Study

Public Hearing

January 20, 2026



What is a Rate Study?

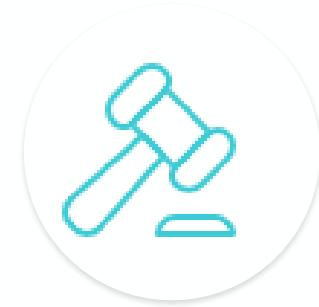
A financial planning and rate setting process that:



Promotes a Utility Financial Viability by Recovering Costs:
O&M
Capital
Reserves
Debt Service

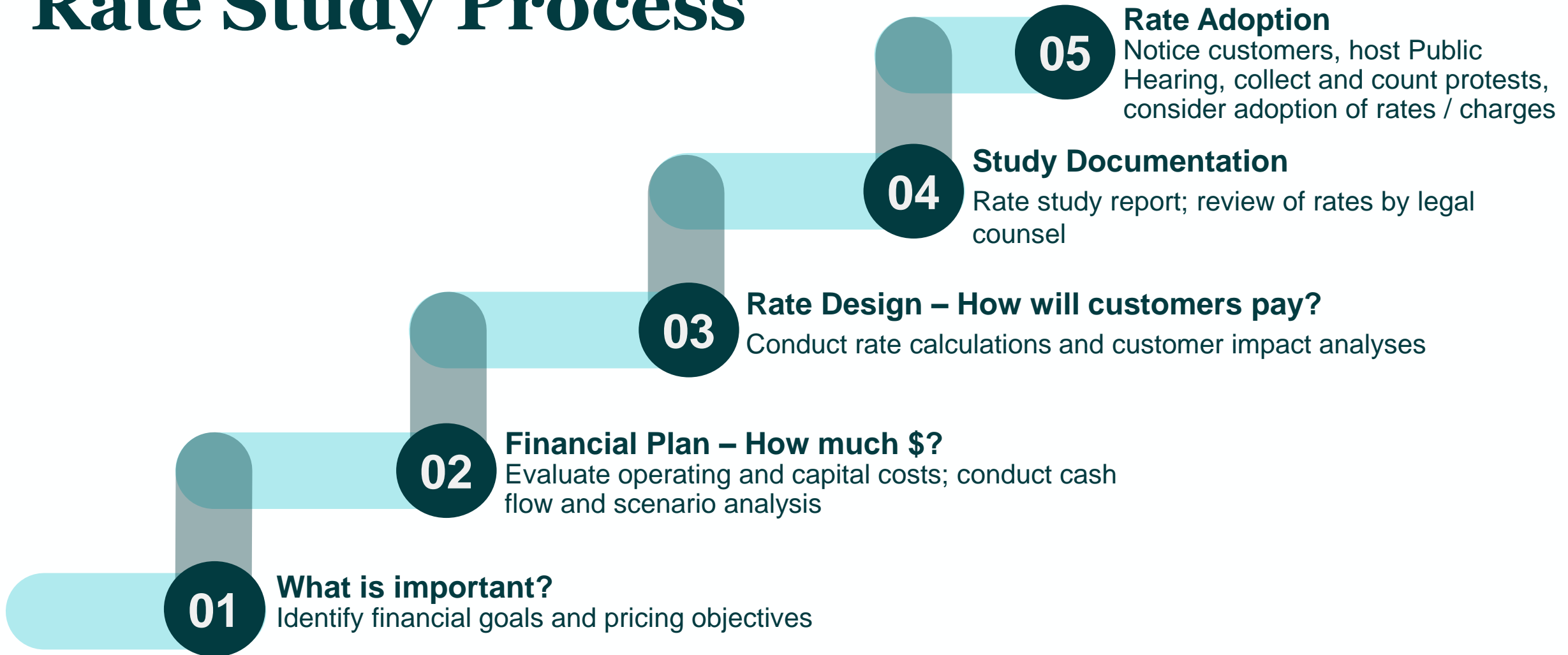


Community Objectives:
Conservation, Affordability
Fairness & Equity
Rate and Revenue Stability



Derives Legally Defensible Rates & Charges

Rate Study Process



← **Stakeholder Engagement** →
(start early and often)

Why Would the City do a Water Rate Study?

- **Rates must keep up with the City's costs to operate the utilities**
- Utility service is not like other government services (Police, Fire, Libraries, Parks) that are funded by tax dollars from the General Fund
- The water utilities are primarily funded by customer rate revenue
 - › It's a non-profit business
- By law (Proposition 218), rates must be based on the cost to serve water



Water Utility is Not Covering Expenses

Why Rate Increases are Needed:

An Increase is long overdue: City has not raised rates/charges since 2018!

Deficit: Water fund is currently operating at a deficit

Lowest charges: It has the lowest water rates/charge out of 8 surrounding agencies

Inflation: Post Covid-19 inflation reached highest rate since 1981 and has impacted operational and capital project costs

Inflation up 25% since 2018 ([Bureau of Labor Statistics Data](#))

Rain: FY 2023 and 2024 were wet years; selling 12% less water than in 2021 while most of your costs are fixed

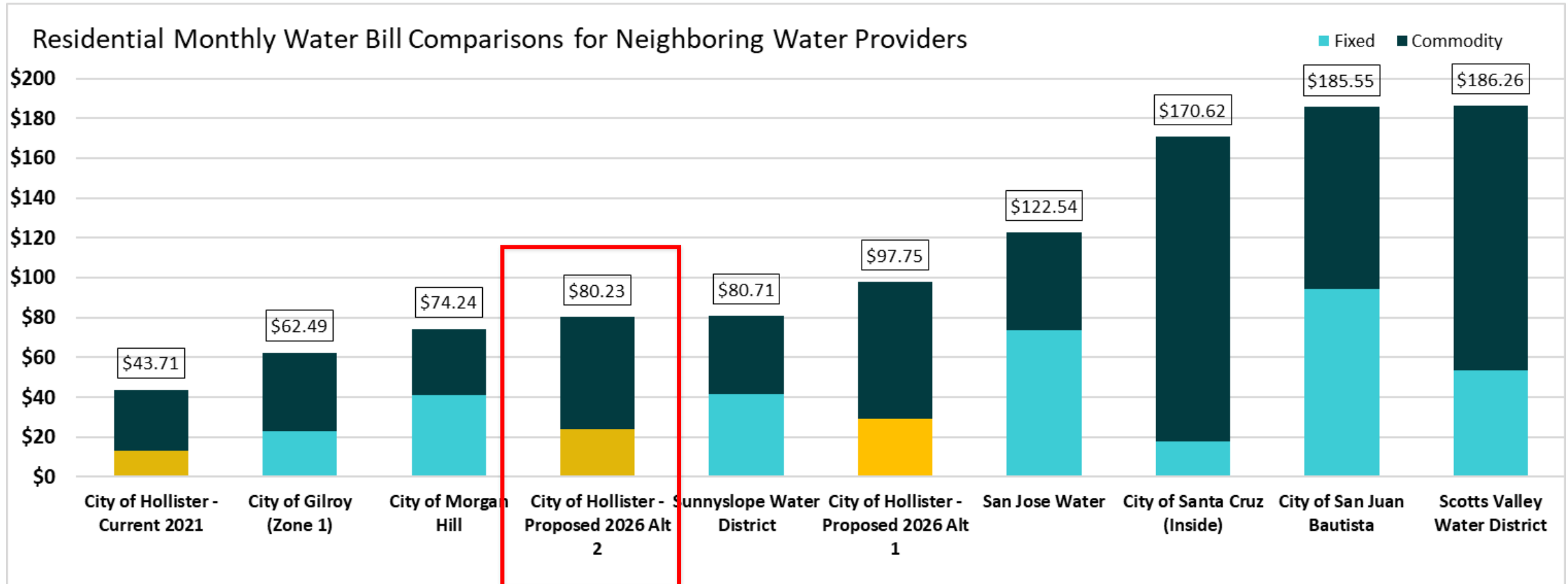
Wholesale Water Costs:

Urban JPA costs up 48% since 2018

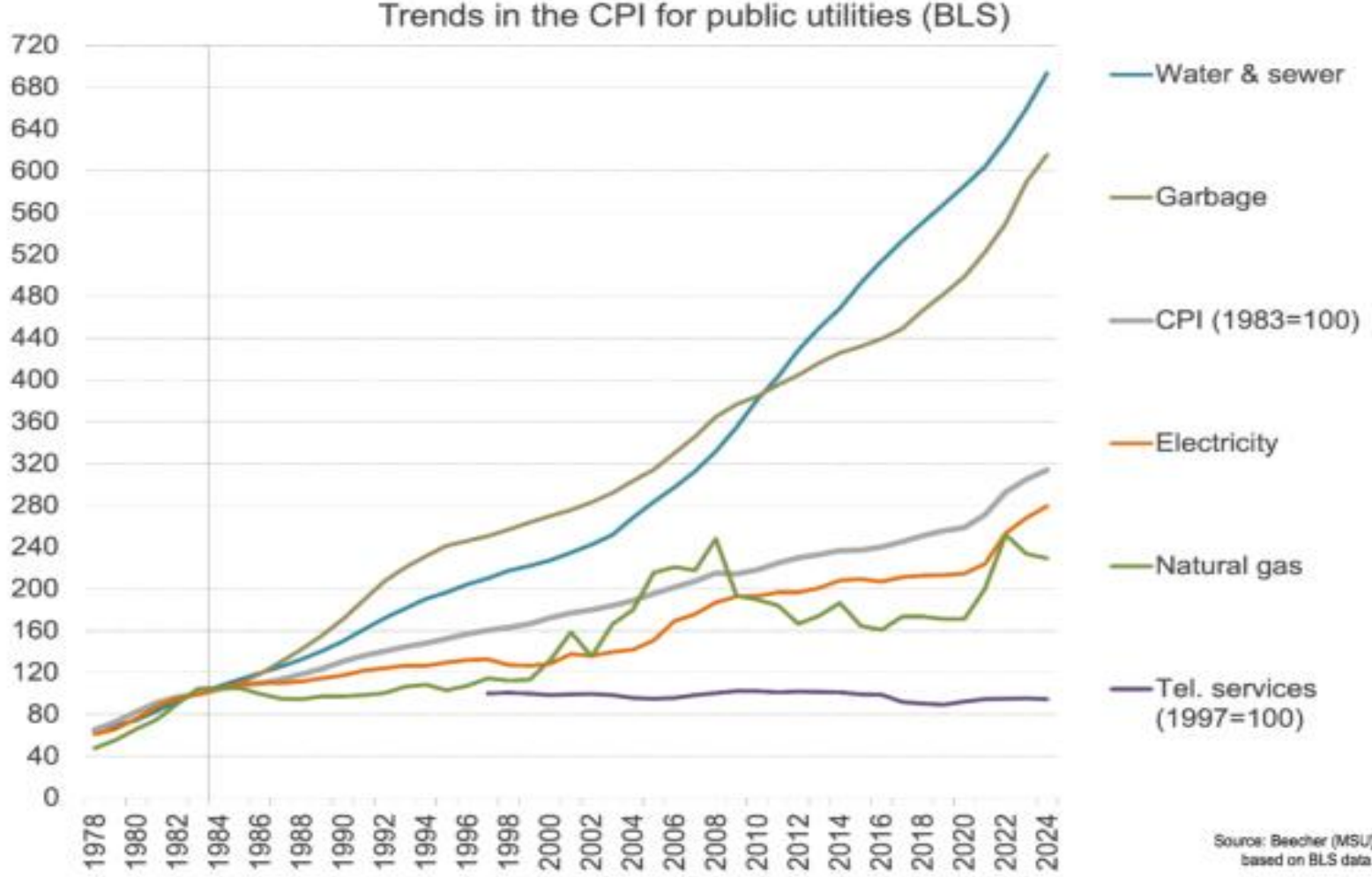
SBCWD groundwater costs up 175% since 2018

Aging Infrastructure / Deferred Maintenance

Water Rate Survey



Water & Sewer Compared to Other Goods



Source: Beecher (MSU) based on BLS data.

Figure 1. CPI Trends for Public Utilities in the US.

The y-axis is a unitless index. The summary data is from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of the U.S. Department of Labor. Data does not reflect actual utility rates. Data in parentheses identifies the year at which the utility price equaled 100 percent of CPI.

Source: Beecher 2025.

Proposition 218 Requirements – Paraphrased

Cannot collect more than what you need

Revenue must be used to cover the costs for which the charge was imposed

Must send a written notice to customers no less than 45 days before a public hearing

The fee may not exceed the proportional cost to serve the parcel

The charge must be for a service that is actually used or immediately available

Financial Planning Assumptions



Assumptions / Reserve Targets

Reserve	Target	Approximate \$ Value over Study Period
Operating	20% of O&M Expenses	\$2.2M
Capital	2% of Asset Value	\$2M
Total		\$4.2M

O&M Expenses

Expenses Summary	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
Expenses by Category						
Personnel	\$2,495,056	\$2,628,097	\$2,725,879	\$2,827,542	\$2,933,249	\$3,043,171
Services and Supplies	\$1,816,957	\$1,675,072	\$1,743,589	\$1,814,914	\$1,889,163	\$1,966,457
Contractual	\$645,435	\$664,608	\$691,192	\$718,840	\$747,594	\$777,497
Water Supply Costs	\$5,330,000	\$5,070,000	\$5,472,800	\$5,907,712	\$6,377,300	\$6,884,335
Minor Capital	\$375,200	\$52,300	\$54,392	\$56,024	\$57,704	\$59,436
Unfunded Accrued Liability	\$343,071	\$323,973	\$336,932	\$350,409	\$364,426	\$379,003
Other Expenses	\$346,340	\$350,000	\$364,000	\$378,560	\$393,702	\$409,450
Total Expenses	\$11,352,059	\$10,764,050	\$11,388,784	\$12,054,001	\$12,763,139	\$13,519,349

City Council Selected Alternative 2

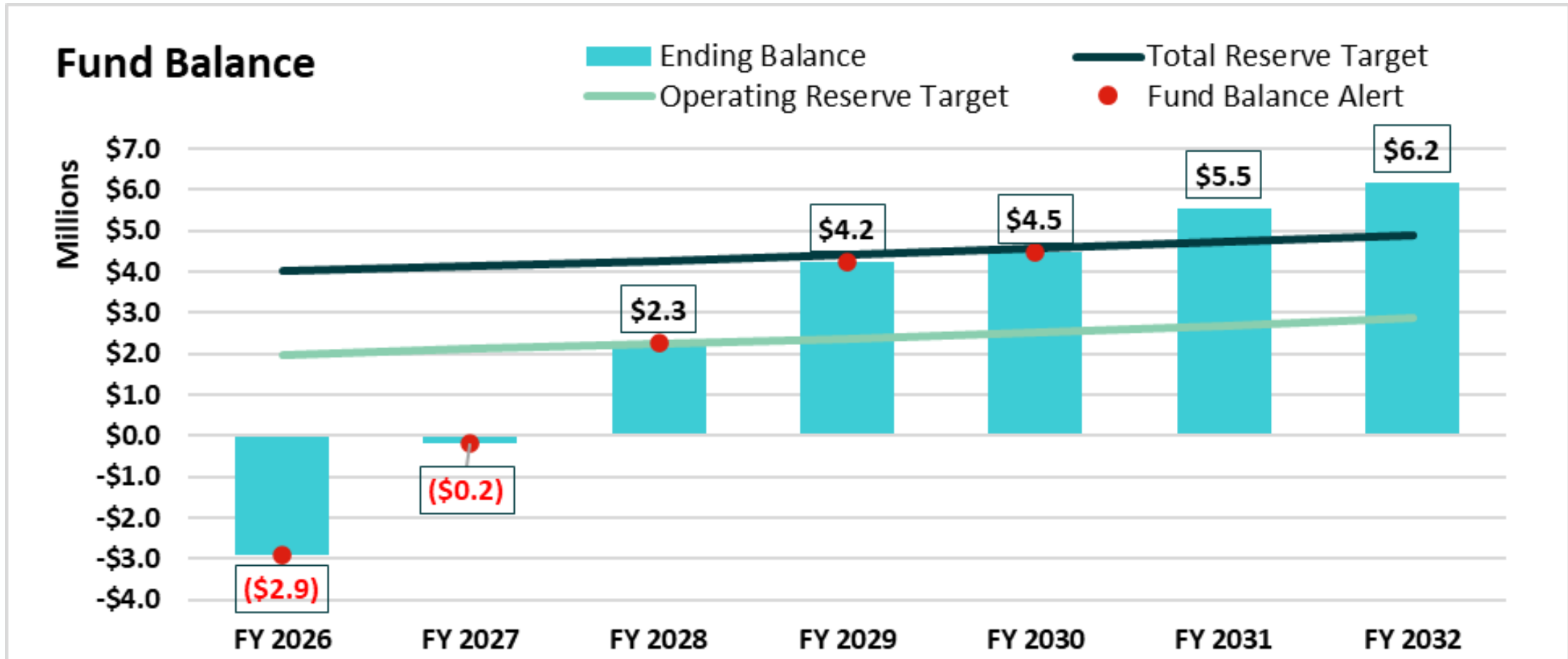
- Revenue *increases do not exactly equate to customer* bill impacts

Alternative		FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030
1	Revenue Increase	95%	17%	3%	3%	2%
	Capital Execution	60%	60%	60%	60%	60%
	Loan	\$9M				
2	Revenue Increase	60%	40%	2%	2%	2%
	Capital Execution	15%	15%	20%	65%	75%
	Loan	\$7M				

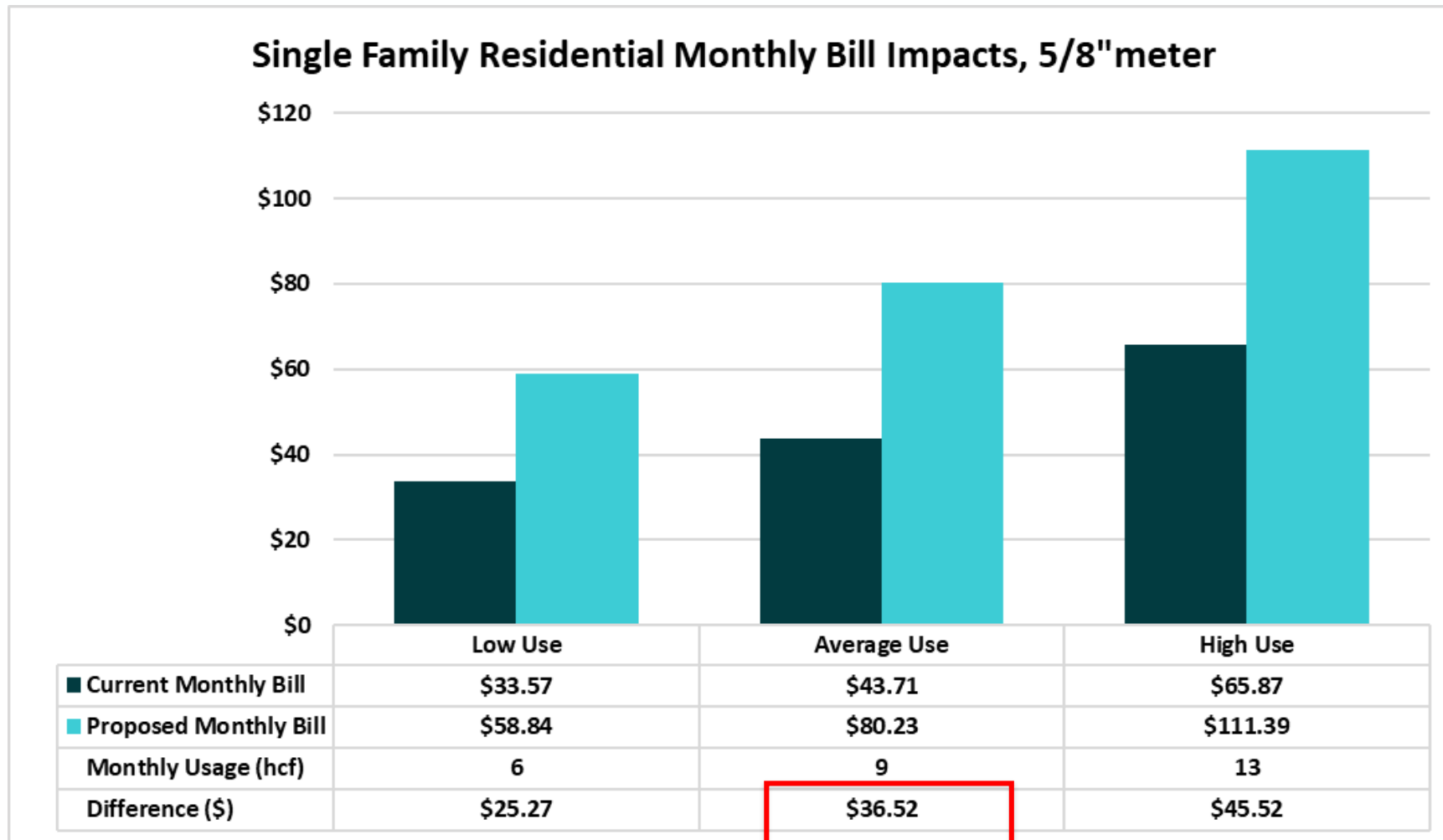
Capital Improvement Projects

Capital - Inflated	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	Total
Alternative 1	\$0	\$1,840,601	\$1,840,601	\$1,840,601	\$1,840,601	\$7,362,404
Alternative 2	\$0	\$460,150	\$460,150	\$613,534	\$1,993,984	\$3,527,818

Alternative 2 – Projected Reserve Balances



First Year Bill Impacts



Five Year Rate Schedule

Line No.	Monthly Fixed Charges	Current	Proposed FY 2026	Proposed FY 2027	Proposed FY 2028	Proposed FY 2029	Proposed FY 2030
1	5/8"	\$13.29	\$23.98	\$33.33	\$34.00	\$34.68	\$35.37
2	3/4"	\$13.29	\$23.98	\$33.33	\$34.00	\$34.68	\$35.37
3	1"	\$28.16	\$37.52	\$52.15	\$53.19	\$54.25	\$55.34
4	1 1/2"	\$52.68	\$71.37	\$99.20	\$101.18	\$103.20	\$105.26
5	2"	\$78.95	\$111.98	\$155.65	\$158.76	\$161.94	\$165.18
6	3"	\$155.53	\$240.61	\$334.45	\$341.14	\$347.96	\$354.92
7	4"	\$232.13	\$430.17	\$597.94	\$609.90	\$622.10	\$634.54
8	6"	\$461.93	\$1,086.85	\$1,510.72	\$1,540.93	\$1,571.75	\$1,603.19
9	8"	\$713.61	\$1,899.23	\$2,639.93	\$2,692.73	\$2,746.58	\$2,801.51

Line No.	Commodity Charges	Current	Proposed FY 2026	Proposed FY 2027	Proposed FY 2028	Proposed FY 2029	Proposed FY 2030
1	Single Family Residential						
2	Tier 1	\$3.38	\$5.81	\$8.08	\$8.24	\$8.40	\$8.57
3	Tier 2	\$5.54	\$7.79	\$10.83	\$11.05	\$11.27	\$11.50
4	Tier 3	\$6.34	\$8.85	\$12.30	\$12.55	\$12.80	\$13.06
5	Multi-Family/Industrial	\$4.39	\$6.74	\$9.37	\$9.56	\$9.75	\$9.95
6	Commercial	\$4.39	\$6.58	\$9.15	\$9.33	\$9.52	\$9.71
7	Landscape	\$4.39	\$7.42	\$10.31	\$10.52	\$10.73	\$10.94

Summary

- The City has not increased water rates in 7 years and is *long* overdue for a rate increase
- It has the lowest rates around for an old water systems which need reinvestment
- These rate increase will allow the water fund to get out of a deficit and continue to provide reliable water service



Thank you

Contacts

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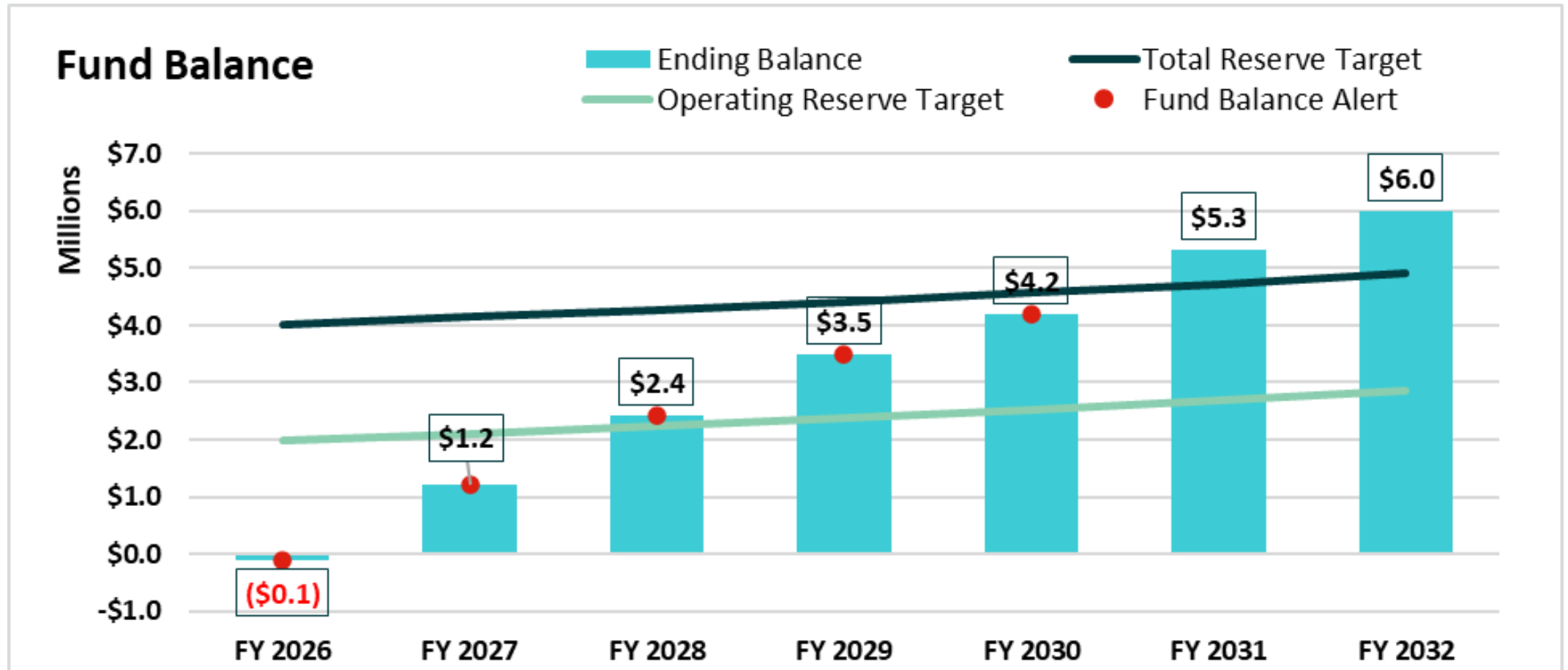
Lindsay Roth / Lroth@raftelis.com

Journ Galvan / Jgalvin@raftelis.com

Back-up Slides



Alternative 1 – Projected Reserve Balances

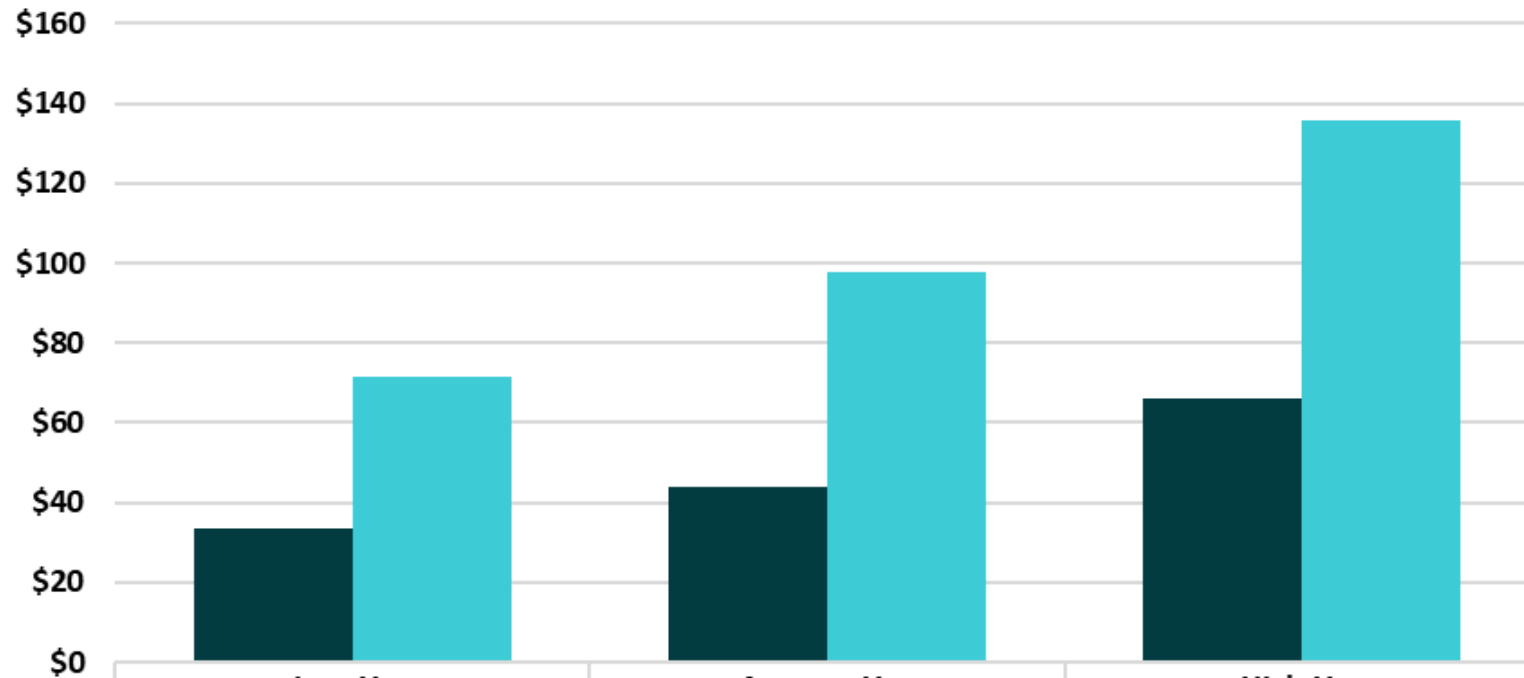


Rate Derivation

- The City gets groundwater from San Benito County Water District and surface water from the Hollister Urban Area JPA
- Groundwater is less expensive
- City aims to use less ground water due to water quality concerns
- This increases the tier 1 rate because it is based on the cost of groundwater
- Therefore, revenue increases are not the same as single family residential bill impacts

First Year Bill Impacts

Single Family Residential Monthly Bill Impacts, 5/8" meter



	Low Use	Average Use	High Use
Current Monthly Bill	\$33.57	\$43.71	\$65.87
Proposed Monthly Bill	\$71.64	\$97.75	\$135.79
Monthly Usage (hcf)	6	9	13
Difference (\$)	\$38.07	\$54.04	\$69.92

Alternative 1 Five Year Rates

Line No.	Monthly Fixed Charges	Current	Proposed FY 2026	Proposed FY 2027	Proposed FY 2028	Proposed FY 2029	Proposed FY 2030
1	5/8"	\$13.29	\$29.10	\$34.05	\$35.07	\$36.12	\$36.84
2	3/4"	\$13.29	\$29.10	\$34.05	\$35.07	\$36.12	\$36.84
3	1"	\$28.16	\$45.50	\$53.24	\$54.84	\$56.49	\$57.62
4	1 1/2"	\$52.68	\$86.49	\$101.19	\$104.23	\$107.36	\$109.51
5	2"	\$78.95	\$135.68	\$158.75	\$163.51	\$168.42	\$171.79
6	3"	\$155.53	\$291.46	\$341.01	\$351.24	\$361.78	\$369.02
7	4"	\$232.13	\$521.02	\$609.59	\$627.88	\$646.72	\$659.65
8	6"	\$461.93	\$1,316.30	\$1,540.07	\$1,586.27	\$1,633.86	\$1,666.54
9	8"	\$713.61	\$2,300.14	\$2,691.16	\$2,771.89	\$2,855.05	\$2,912.15

Line No.	Commodity Charges	Current	Proposed FY 2026	Proposed FY 2027	Proposed FY 2028	Proposed FY 2029	Proposed FY 2030
1	Single Family Residential						
2	Tier 1	\$3.38	\$7.09	\$8.30	\$8.55	\$8.81	\$8.99
3	Tier 2	\$5.54	\$9.51	\$11.13	\$11.46	\$11.80	\$12.04
4	Tier 3	\$6.34	\$10.80	\$12.64	\$13.02	\$13.41	\$13.68
5	Multi-Family/Industrial	\$4.39	\$8.23	\$9.63	\$9.92	\$10.22	\$10.42
6	Commercial	\$4.39	\$8.04	\$9.41	\$9.69	\$9.98	\$10.18
7	Landscape	\$4.39	\$9.05	\$10.59	\$10.91	\$11.24	\$11.46

Agenda

- Introduction
- Why rate increases are needed
- Water
 - › Assumptions
 - › Financial Plan Alternatives
 - › Bill Impacts